

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 11, 2012  
TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
FROM: SUSAN GYGI, P.E. POTOMAC YARD PROJECTS MANAGER, T&ES  
SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 5 – CRYSTAL CITY/POTOMAC YARD (ROUTE 1) TRANSITWAY UPDATE

**ISSUE:** Update on the Crystal City/Potomac Yard (Route 1 transit corridor) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station Concept Design, and Route 1 Streetcar conversion project.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission receive the update on the station concept design for the Route 1 BRT, and the Route 1 Streetcar conversion project.

**DISCUSSION:** In association, but under a separate contract than the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit Design/Build contract, the design of the vertical elements within the station platform areas of the transitway is underway.

On June 14, 2012 a public meeting was held to provide an opportunity for the public to see the three concepts under consideration and provide input into concept design elements.

### Background

An update to the Route 1 BRT Design/Build contract was provided to the Transportation Commission at its June 6, 2012 meeting. This memorandum provides an update on the station design, as well as an update on the Route 1 Streetcar project.

Design for the vertical elements of the transit stations began in May 2012. There are seven stations within the Route 1 BRT, located at:

- East Glebe Road – Southbound only (Northbound is located within Potomac Yard)
- East Swann Avenue – Northbound and Southbound – far side
- East Custis Avenue – Northbound and Southbound – far side
- Potomac Avenue – Northbound and Southbound – both on north side of intersection.

### Community Input to Date

Staff met with the community on June 14, 2012 to solicit input on concept design elements that were important to the community. The guiding criteria will determine which shelter concept design will move forward. Guiding criteria include:

- Help brand the corridor
- Reflect Alexandria culture and identity



- Provide safety/security for users
- Provide for pedestrian circulation
- Cost effective/within budget
- Has a strong, identifiable roof
- Provides protection from the elements
- Provides good lighting
- Allows for off-board fare collection and real time transit information
- Includes energy efficient elements.

With the guiding criteria in mind, three shelter concepts were presented for comment and are shown below. Please note, that elements from any of the concepts below can be mixed and matched and are shown below as options to each concept. Final determination of the elements within the preferred alternative will be determined taking into account public comment, the historic nature of Alexandria, previous determinations of Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Specific items that are included in each of the options are:

- A crash barrier or wall at the back of the station platform to provide safety to both the transit user (from a vehicle jumping the curb and crashing into the station platform) and the adjacent travel lane (from a transit user stepping off the back of the station platform and into on-coming traffic)
- Sufficient shelter space for seating and standing individuals
- Enough platform area for two buses to board/off-board simultaneously
- Protection from the elements
- Lighting at the station both inside the shelter as well as along the station platform
- Off-board fare collection machines
- Access to real-time transit information (next-bus, etc.)
- Station signage
- Additional seating both inside and outside of the shelter

Each of the shelter options were rated by City Staff as to whether or not they met the guiding criteria as listed above. Table 1 below shows the determination.

**Table 1: Shelter Concept versus Guiding Criteria**

Shelter Option	Branding for the Corridor	Reflects Alexandria culture and identity	Safety/Security	Pedestrian circulation	Cost/budget	Strong, identifiable roof	Protection from the elements	Lighting	Off-board fare collection and real-time info	Energy efficiency
		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Preferred Alternative:**

It is the recommendation of City Staff to move forward with Shelter Option #2 at this time taking into consideration the above guiding criteria.

**Next Steps for Station Design**

- September 2012 – Present Concept Station Design to Planning Commission
- September 2012 – Present Concept Station Design to City Council
- November 2012 – Design Complete
- December 2013 – Opening of Route 1 BRT between Potomac Avenue and East Glebe Road

**Route 1 Streetcar Conversion Update**

A staff update on the Route 1 Streetcar conversion was provided to the Transportation Commission at its June 6, 2012 meeting. Arlington County has determined that it does not anticipate requesting federal New Starts/Small Starts funding. The City has already determined, through its Potomac Yard planning, that it will allocate its special tax district and tax base growth from Potomac Yard, along with substantial developer contributions, to fund a potential new Metrorail Station in Potomac Yard. As a result, the City does not have the revenue flexibility that the County has in large part because Arlington is not facing the need to fund a new Metrorail Station. The City will need to conduct an Alternatives Analysis in order for it to seek Federal New Starts/Small Starts funding. Staff proposed a process for moving forward on the Streetcar conversion project, which included a two-phased project approach.

1. Arlington would proceed with the Environmental Assessment for the streetcar segments in Arlington as Phase I of this project.
2. No Alternatives Analysis for either the Arlington or the Alexandria streetcar segments would be undertaken at this time.
3. In early 2014, the City would plan to initiate Phase II of the streetcar conversion study project. This would come soon after the site of the Potomac Yard Metrorail station (or a no-build alternative) is determined via a Record of Decision through the ongoing Environmental Impact Statement Metrorail station study process.

At their June 16, 2012 meetings, both the Alexandria Council and the Arlington County Board approved the study of the joint streetcar conversion be conducted as a two-phased study process, and allow for an inter-jurisdictional agreement to be signed. Since then, the City and Arlington County have sent an initiation letter to the FTA, proposing the new process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Route 1 Shelter Options